IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A method in data processing system for performing an operation using a key comprising;

receiving a call from an application to perform the operation using the key;

in response to receiving the call, automatically identifying a routine to perform the operation;

in response to receiving the call, automatically identifying a keystore containing the key;

creating a data structure used by the routine to execute the operation, wherein the data structure includes parameters of the call received from the application;

sending the data structure to the routine, wherein the routine and the keystore are identified using the data structure.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

determining whether the key is located in the keystore; and

responsive to the key being absent from the keystore, inhibiting the sending step.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[3]] 1, wherein the data structure is a configuration associated with an application originating the call.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the keystore is one of a virtual keystore, a keystore, an adapter, and a keystore in a smart card.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the routine is a Common Data Security Architecture plug-in.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising initializing the routine prior to sending the data structure to the routine.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the call is received from an application and further comprising:

receiving a result from the operation; and

returning the result to the application.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 further comprising:

responsive to receiving the result, performing any necessary updates to objects in the keystore.

10. (Currently amended) A cryptographic system for use in a data processing system comprising:

a security layer;

a plurality of cryptographic routines, wherein the plurality of cryptographic routines are accessed through the security layer;

a keystore; and

a keystore application program interface layer coupled to the security layer, wherein the keystore application program interface layer receives a call from an application to perform a cryptographic operation, in response to receiving the call automatically identifies a routine, calls the routine to perform the cryptographic operation, receives a result from the routine, and returns the result to the application, wherein the routine uses a data structure that includes parameters of the call received from the application to execute the operation, and wherein the routine and the keystore are identified using the data structure.

11. (Original) The cryptographic system of claim 10, wherein the security layer is a Common Data Security Architecture layer.

12. (Original) The cryptographic system claim 10, wherein the plurality of cryptographic routines are a plurality of plug-ins.

13. (Currently amended) The cryptographic system of claim 10, wherein the keystore is ~~within~~ one of a plurality of keystores and wherein the keystore application program interface layer identifies the keystore from the plurality of keystores.

14. (Original) The cryptographic system of claim 10, wherein the routine and the keystore are identified in the data processing system accessed by the keystore application program interface layer.

15. (Original) The cryptographic system of claim 10, wherein the keystore application program interface layer performs updates to the keystore in response to receiving the result from the routine.

16. (Original) The cryptographic system claim 10, wherein the keystore application program interface layer initializes the routine used to perform the cryptographic operation.

17. (Currently amended) A data processing system for performing an operation using a key comprising;

receiving means for receiving a call from an application to perform the operation using the key;

in response to receiving the call, first identifying means for automatically identifying a routine to perform the operation;

in response to receiving the call, second identifying means for automatically identifying a keystore containing the key;

creating means for creating a data structure used by the routine to execute the operation, wherein the data structure includes parameters of the call received from the application;

sending means for sending the data structure to the routine, wherein the routine and the keystore are identified using the data structure.

18. (Original) The data processing system of claim 17 further comprising:

determining means for determining whether the key is located in the keystore; and

responsive to the key being absent from the keystore, for inhibiting the sending step.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently amended) The data processing system of claim [[19]] 17, wherein the data structure is a configuration associated with an application originating the call.

21. (Original) The data processing system of claim 17, wherein the keystore is one of a virtual keystore, a keystore, an adapter, and a keystore in a smart card.

22. (Original) The data processing system of claim 17, wherein the routine is a Common Data Security Architecture plug-in.

23. (Original) The data processing system of claim 17 further comprising initializing the routine prior to sending the data structure to the routine.

24. (Original) The data processing system of claim 17, wherein the call is received from an application, and wherein the receiving means is a first receiving means, further comprising:

second receiving means for receiving a result from the operation; and

returning means for returning the result to the application.

25. (Original) The data processing system of claim 24 further comprising:

performing means responsive to receiving the result, for performing any necessary updates to objects in the keystore.

26. (Currently amended) A computer program product in a computer readable medium for performing an operation using a key, the computer program product comprising;

first instructions for receiving a call from an application to perform the operation using the key;

in response to receiving the call, second instructions for automatically identifying a routine to perform the operation;

in response to receiving the call, third instructions for automatically identifying a keystore containing the key;

fourth instructions for creating a data structure used by the routine to execute the operation, wherein the data structure includes parameters of the call received from the application;

fifth instructions for sending the data structure to the routine, wherein the routine and the keystore are identified using the data structure.